



News Release

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Release 2003-34

DROPPING SNAKE RIVER FLOW LEVELS **PROMPTS WARNING TO SOME WATER USERS**

For Immediate Release
Boise, Idaho - June 24, 2003

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Dropping flow levels on the Snake River near Murphy have prompted state water managers to issue warnings to a dozen water users that they may be required to temporarily stop diverting water from so that the state can meet minimum flow levels requirements contained in the Swan Falls Agreement with Idaho Power Company, the Idaho Department of Water Resources announced today.

IDWR says the current hydrologic conditions may result in the Snake River falling below 3,900 cubic feet per second flow levels at the Murphy river gauging station. The 3,900 CFS flow level is the level set in the Swan Falls agreement and is guaranteed by a senior priority water right held by Idaho Power.

This morning (Tuesday, June 24) the river was flowing at approximately 4,560 CFS at the Murphy gauging station. However, IDWR believes the next two weeks will be a critical period in which river flows may fall below the 3,900 CFS minimum level. The flow level has been as low as 4,123 CFS in just the past week.

A letter from IDWR to the threatened water users states that "if the flow falls below 3,900 CFS, you will have to cease diversion ... since (your) right has a priority junior to the minimum stream flow right." The agency says the dropping river levels come as the state experiences its fourth consecutive year of drought, made worse by an early siege of hot weather and other unusual weather conditions.

Priority dates on the dozen rights range from 1986 to 1999. The priority date for rights being protected under the Swan Falls Agreement is July 1, 1985.

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Water uses allowed under the threatened rights include: one mining right; one wildlife right; three diversion to storage rights; one municipal right; two fish propagation rights; one aesthetic storage right; and three irrigation rights.

The flow level agreement was completed in the mid-1980s between the state and Idaho Power Company as part of an agreement to resolve a lawsuit by the Company against the state. That same agreement also initiated the on-going Snake River Basin Adjudication.

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